NEWS

Fair Share Amendment is working as intended

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

September 13, 2024 . 2:00 PM — 3 min read

Members of the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition gathered at the State House prior to the initial vote on the Fair Share Amendment in 2022. COURTESY PHOTO/MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

The following is an opinion column written and submitted by Sen. Jason Lewis and Rep. Jim O'Day:

Subscribe

Less than two years after voters approved the Fair Share Amendment to the Massachusetts constitution, the "millionaire's tax" is already having a positive impact on Massachusetts. Our state now has a fairer tax system, and we are making transformative investments in education and transportation that are improving residents' lives.

From 2015 to 2022, we were proud to be the lead legislative sponsors of the Fair Share Amendment, the constitutional amendment to establish a new 4% surtax on annual incomes exceeding one million dollars, with the revenue dedicated to funding our public schools, colleges, roads, bridges, and public transit.

Working alongside the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition of community organizations, faith-based groups, and labor unions, we helped shepherd the amendment through four legislative votes and onto the November, 2022 ballot.

The Fair Share Amendment was designed to address two related problems: our unfair tax system, and years of inadequate investment in public education and critical transportation infrastructure. We're already making great progress on both counts.

Before Fair Share was passed, the richest 1% of Massachusetts residents paid a lower portion of their income in state and local taxes than did lower- and middle-income taxpayers. But the new Fair Share tax closes most of that gap, with the state's highest-income residents now paying closer to the same share of their income that the rest of us pay.

And because the tax is only applied to the portion of a taxpayer's annual income that is over $1 million (with that threshold increased annually for inflation), most of the revenue raised comes from those making more than $5 million – the richest of the rich.

Subscribe

As a result, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, Massachusetts is now the seventh most "progressive" state tax system in the country, moving up 10 spots from before voters approved the Fair Share Amendment.

While the ultra-rich are paying a little bit more, the Fair Share Amendment is making Massachusetts more affordable for everyone else.

Since last year, money from Fair Share has enabled every public K-12 student in the state access to free breakfast and lunch at school. Families are saving $1,200 a year per child due to free school meals, and the number of students who are eating a healthy school breakfast and lunch has increased by 24.5% and 16%, respectively.

Starting this fall, Fair Share will fund free community college for every student in Massachusetts, covering both tuition and fees as well as a $1,200 stipend for students whose income is less than 125% of the state median to help pay for books and other expenses. We've also increased financial aid significantly for students at our public colleges and universities, and campuses are already seeing higher enrollment as a result.

At the MBTA, Fair Share is funding hundreds of millions of dollars in much-needed infrastructure improvements, including station and accessibility upgrades, bridge repairs, subway track and signal improvements, and commuter rail projects. And for low-income T riders, the tax now funds a reduced fare program to lower the cost of commuting.

For bus riders in other parts of the state, Fair Share is supporting the largest-ever investment in regional transit authorities, allowing them to expand service, eliminate fares, and add new routes. And the new tax has already generated record funding to local cities and towns for road and bridge repairs, so that municipalities can repave more miles eac

Subscribe

Finally, the Fair Share Amendment is supporting record investments in early education and child care, from expanding universal preK to thousands of children in Gateway Cities and rural communities, to providing grants to child care providers so they can serve more children and raise the wages of their educators without hiking tuitions for families.

These investments funded by Fair Share are making Massachusetts more affordable and equitable for working families and are supporting two key building blocks of a competitive economy: a well-educated workforce and a reliable transportation system.

During the years it took to pass the Fair Share Amendment, opponents claimed there would be dire consequences, from millionaires fleeing the state to tax revenues plummeting. But nearly two years after the amendment's passage, those claims are proving to be false.

The state collected $2.2 billion in Fair Share revenue during its first full year of implementation, far surpassing the projected amount of $1 billion. And there is no evidence of substantial millionaire flight beyond the usual number of retirees who leave each year. In fact, Massachusetts' population grew in 2023, the first year the Fair Share Amendment was in effect, after declining in 2022.

With the Fair Share Amendment, Massachusetts asked the state's wealthiest residents to pay a little more to make much-needed investments in education and transportation. Not even two years later, Fair Share is working as intended, and we're all better off as a result.

Winchester News is a non-profit organization supported by our community. If you appreciate having local Winchester news, please donate to support our work, and subscribe to our free weekly newsletter.

Subscribe

Related

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER
March 4, 2026

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Ma strengthen fair housing

Subscribe

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

March 3, 2026

Latest

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

Subscribe

FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

WINCHESTER NEWS
A TRUSTED AND RELIABLE SOURCE OF LOCAL NEWS

Subscribe to Winchester News

Subscribe

© 2026 Winchester News Group, Inc. Copying and sharing with permission for non-commercial use only.

Subscribe